

Information for Digital Communication Tools
Karl Barksdale, Utah, National Presenter for Speech Recognition

Microsoft Office

- Word 2003
- Word 12 (Office 12) TBA

SAPI Files—Necessary for Speech Recognition

- Windows XP
- Windows XP--Tablet PC Edition
- Windows Vista (TBA)

Speech Recognition

- Dragon NaturallySpeaking 8
- Microsoft Office Speech
- Microsoft Vista Speech (TBA)

Plantronics Headsets

Sound Card Headset

- Plantronics .50

USB

- USB Adapter
- DSP-300
- DS400, 500

PC Requirements for Speech

- Pentium 1.5 GHz (higher if possible)
- 512 MB of RAM (more if possible)
- Certified Sound Blaster sound card or USB adapter
- Quality Noise Cancellation Microphone (Plantronics)

Tablet PC

- Acer
- Toshiba
- Compaq
- ViewSonic
- Fujitsu
- HP
- Lenovo/IBM

Handwriting Recognition

- Office XP
- Office 2003
- Office 12 (TBA)
- Office Tablet PC Edition
- Wacom Graphire4
- Wacom Intuos

PDA

- Palm OS
- Pocket PC
- Outlook 2003

KARL'S IDEAL LAB FOR DIGITOOLS

In this list, I will put minimums in one column and my wish list in another. I hope this narrative helps in the decision-making process. Understanding that you can't possibly get everything, nevertheless, I think brainstorming is best when we dream big dreams and then fall back into reality. This should help us understand why we made certain choices.

Your biggest dilemma at this moment will be in whether or not to wait for Windows Vista and Office 12 or to go with the current Office 2003 (version 11) and Office XP. If it were me, I would hold out for Windows Vista and Office 12. Regardless, you must plan ahead because eventually this lab will run the Vista platform and you don't want to be underpowered. You need to plan ahead especially in the area of RAM and USB headsets regardless if you're running Dragon 8, 9, or Microsoft Office Vista speech recognition in the future.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	WISH LIST
HARDWARE	
A lab of moderately priced computers with an up-to-date processor. Flat screens are a must now to save desktop space. RW CDs are necessary. An 80 GB hard drive.	A lab of tablet PCs. Of course, three times the cost and totally out of the question, but this column is my wish list! Perhaps in a couple of years, tablet PCs will be an affordable reality for a school lab.
512 MB RAM	1 GB RAM (Rationale: very soon, the new Windows Vista will take more RAM than the Current Windows XP. Also, if you are running Windows Vista speech recognition or Dragon NaturallySpeaking 8 or perhaps even a future Dragon 9, you will need the extra RAM when running under Vista.)
SPEECH & HANDWRITING RECOGNITION	
.Audio 50 Headsets with USB Adapters (Rationale: Today sound cards are very inexpensive and are subject to a great deal of static and noise. The only way to get around that in an active classroom is to use USB, which converts analog speech into digital signals and passes them directly to the processor. Especially in a crowded room, USB is a must. You can see how they look at http://www.speakingsolutions.com/headsets/usb_adapter.asp . These USB connectors will last for years and will work with any speech software. The Audio 50 is a high-quality analog headset and a reasonably low-cost.)	Plantronics has more expensive USB headsets, like the DSP 400, but I don't think they are worth the extra price. Plus, they tend to get stolen!
Microsoft Office 2003	I would wait for Office 12 which is in beta now. Office 12 is going to be so much different and better than Office 2003.

Microsoft Office 2003 speech recognition (This doesn't work very well, but you can store the technology with students in a few days of training if it's all you can afford.) (Visit www.SpeakingSolutions.com/speech and compare the products.)	Dragon NaturallySpeaking 8 to run under Windows XP. In the future you will have a choice between Windows Vista SR and Dragon NaturallySpeaking 9 for Vista. If you truly want to teach speech-recognition effectively, you will need one of these two products. (Visit www.SpeakingSolutions.com/speech , and choose the Dragon Scale article.)
Microsoft OneNote	
Wacom Graphire 4 (I would recommend the bundle from SpeakingSolutions which would allow you to save money on your Audio 50 headsets, give your handwriting tablets, pens, a training book, and a tether. Also, you will get Adobe Photoshop Elements free for your digital camera input editing lessons. Visit www.SpeakingSolutions.com/handwriting .)	Wacom has many more expensive models that are truly wonderful, such as a Bluetooth board that is wireless in the Intuos line. But these are very expensive and don't come in bundles. Adobe Photoshop CS would be cool... but it is very expensive.
OTHER INPUT TOOLS	
One scanner students can use in a rotation.	Three scanners students can use.
Several jump drives that can be used to transfer data from the scanning machines to their personal computers.	
1 - 4 or 5 megapixel digital camera	Several 5 megapixel digital cameras
TEACHER TOOLS	
1 tablet PC for you as the instructor. (Rationale: If you have a tablet PC you can demonstrate for students why they are learning the new input technologies such as speech and handwriting. You will gain insight into the future of technology and you will absolutely love this computer!	About three tablet PCs for students to rotate on to or even Outfit your lab a tablet PCs instead of buying desktops! Of course, that triples the cost and is totally out of the question, but again this column is my wish list!
	A wireless headset for speech recognition, something like a CS 50. Trust me, you'll love it!
A projector	A SmartBoard
PDAs	
I would purchase the least expensive PDAs I could find. You can get by on a rotation situation with about 5-10 of them.	A classroom set of PDAs... except I think this is totally overkill. They have to be charged up every night, they tend to get stolen, and they are a bit of a maintenance nightmare.